

By Geoffrey P. Johnston

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The inter-religious violence, which was strongly condemned by Christian and Muslim religious leaders from horn of Africa countries, is not new to Nigeria.

"Since 1999, there have been 13,000 deaths in connection with various sectarian conflicts—not to mention countless examples of people being injured and property being destroyed," says Leonard Leo, chair of the Washington, DC-based **United States Commission on International Religious Freedom**, which was established by the US Congress in 1998 to advise the federal government on matters of religious liberty around the globe.

"Unfortunately, there hasn't been any serious investigation of any of these instances of violence," says Leo, "and that creates room for Boko Haram and other extremist groups to exist."